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EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALISTS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED WEEKLY BY THE NEW YORK PRESS.

The Conflict of Civil and Military Authority.

From the Herald. As the indications come from all points of the political compass, we perceive preparations for new strife between the various factions. The party journals seem disposed to involve the country in another quarrel. They are evidently eager for a light upon some issue, and they do not seem particular as to what it is.

It is clear that military and civil authority cannot be co-existent. Either the military authority must have free scope to employ its functions as a police—which we regard it as now constituted in the South—and remove all obstructions to the proper enactments of the law, whether these obstructions appear in the shape of civil office-holders or private individuals, or it must be abandoned altogether.

We are not assured that the President has accepted the advice of his Cabinet on this question of the conflict between military and civil power. We can see through the clouds and storms that darken the horizon a pretty clear pathway. Let the programme set down in the laws of Congress tending to reconstruction be carried out according to the President's interpretation of them in his messages, and there will be little difficulty.

In so far as the adage is universally true that history repeats itself, we are not at a loss for a parallel for our present political condition. The war of factions, which may be set down as an inherent evil in all great nations, has produced like results everywhere.

We may find another evidence of the mischief of faction as developed by the English revolution of King Charles' time. From the first evidence of popular discontent with the administration of the government the country was divided into factions, and the Parliament was the nursery of all the factions feeling that pervaded the public mind.

In the French revolution of 1789 factionism ruled the hour. It prevailed in the Convention; it governed the national policy, so far as there was any policy then existing; it organized proscription; it inaugurated confiscation, and it sanctified the guillotine.

The President on Dangerous Ground. From the Tribune. The National Intelligencer announces that at a very recent consultation of the Cabinet it was decided that the military officers in command of the five districts into which the ten represented Southern States are divided, have no power to remove civil officers deriving their authority from the State Governments as now organized.

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errors." In other words, the President has made up his mind to construe the bill in his own way. He has got an opinion from Sherman and will issue his orders. If he can only induce Sheridan and Sickles to execute these orders, the country will not feel as badly as would be expected if he were to remove them. Sheridan may consider his "errors" forgiven if he will only do what he is told and sin no more.

If this statement is true, we feel that the President has taken a very grave step, and is treading on dangerous ground. We have tried to show the purpose of this Military bill, and the moral obligation assumed by the President. We have earnestly entreated the President not to violate a law which it was understood he would execute. We claim that it is not executing the law to restore Monroe red-handed to office, and to give Wells another chance at the four millions which are said to have excited his political cupidity.

The purpose of the Military bill is to give certain Generals supreme power. To that end each General commanding is absolutely in command, and all officers, civil or military, are merely so many lieutenants for the expression of his will. If any officer interferes with this duty he is to be put aside. Congress intended this, and, what is more, the President recognized the intention.

We feel that the President is treading on dangerous ground—not only for himself, but for the country. His organ assures us that he does not forget he was a patriot in 1850—which means, we fear, that he is in a combative, ugly humor, and intends to have another contest with the radicals. This humor is a small consideration. We leave the President and the radicals to fight it out.

Mr. McCulloch's Last Letter. From the Nation. On the 30th of April last, forty-three "merchants, manufacturers, and professional men of Boston" cordially invited Secretary McCulloch to meet them at dinner and give them an opportunity to express their appreciation of his ability and integrity.

Mr. McCulloch's answer is dated May 22—a severe trial, no doubt, to the patience of the forty-three—and is, like everything that Mr. McCulloch writes, full of wisdom. Though nominally addressed to forty-three private, though distinguished, "men of Boston," it is really an official declaration of the views entertained by the Secretary at that time on the condition and prospects of the national finances; and hence it can scarcely be on account of its private character or from regard for the feelings of the forty-three invitees, that the letter has received so little notice from the public press.

We, and all public men with us, have to thank the Secretary for furnishing us with another striking and warning example of the danger of writing letters instead of making speeches. Mr. McCulloch's off-hand remarks after a Boston dinner with wealthy "merchants, manufacturers, and professional men" could be made light of by those who disagree with him, while even his friends and supporters would scarce dare appeal to them in seriousness. But when the Secretary, in the Treasury at Washington, after three weeks' delay, sets forth his views in writing, his staunchest opponents are compelled to listen, while his friends know precisely what to reply.

them that they must not expect the next debt statement to show a decrease of debt, but even that the ordinary increase is unavoidable, and that they must begin to advance themselves. When he assures us that he has not for some months past reduced the circulation of United States notes, we naturally turn to rebuke our Wall street friends for their constant clamor against contraction, which they pretend is the cause of the tight money market; and when, on the 20th of May, seven days after being written, this important document is published in the New York papers, and gold and stocks begin to advance, upon, we dare not rebuke the heartless men, Wall street speculators and gold gamblers, who insinuate that it was a nice thing for the forty-three Bostonians to have known the Secretary's views in advance of the outside public.

If it were not lamentable, however, it would be laughable to see the contrast between Mr. McCulloch's letter dated May 22, and the statement of the Secretary of the Treasury to the people of the United States dated June 1. The increase in the debt, which on May 22 was unavoidable, has on June 1 become a decrease of \$5,171,000; the contraction which on May 12 had, for some months past, and for four excellent reasons, been suspended, has on June 1 resulted in a withdrawal of currency amounting to the enormous figure of \$39,000,000, and the faith of the forty-three in Mr. McCulloch's ability to administer the Treasury so as to merit their and their fellow-citizens' confidence is somewhat sorely shaken.

The fact is, that Mr. McCulloch and all future Secretaries of the Treasury had better confine themselves in their after-dinner remarks or their ante-dinner letters to simple facts, and not indulge in prophecy. The present Secretary has scarcely ever made a public statement relating ever so remotely to the future which has not been completely contradicted by himself, or falsified by events within a very short time, and each time the result has been more and more mischievous. In the present instance we can only wonder at the fact that the Treasury accounts which could have kept the Secretary himself so entirely in the dark. We do, seriously and sincerely, believe in Mr. McCulloch's integrity of purpose; but we also believe that he is controlled in many things, against his will, or without his knowledge, by unprincipled underlings and a vicious system, both inherited from the time of Mr. Chase, both symbolized by Mr. Chase's "private memoranda," both demonstrated by Mr. Fessenden's unwillingness to put his name to any important paper emanating from the Treasury, both bearing fruit in the present condition of the Government balances in the national banks—to which we refer below—and both lending color to the rumors current in Wall street that the statement has been made to look favorably for the intentional withholding of requisitions and other measures well known to the initiated.

It is not, however, for the sake of pointing out Mr. McCulloch's minor errors, or in order to warn him against the dangers of prophecy, that we refer to this remarkable letter. Our main object is to protest against Mr. McCulloch's interpretation of the duties to which he is assigned. The Secretary of the Treasury is appointed to obey the laws made and provided for his collection and persistent discharge to the public revenues. When he seeks to make laws, when he undertakes, in imitation of the sumptuary enactments of bygone ages of ignorance and barbarism, to force the people of the United States, at his bidding, to increase their production, to cease their speculation, to diminish their extravagance, he only renders himself ridiculous.

Mr. McCulloch wants to increase production by contracting the currency and lowering prices. Does he not know that men hesitate to produce on a declining market, and that the stoppage of production is more than half due to the more or less persistent contraction of the currency? Does he forget that there are bears in Wall street as well as bulls—men as ready to speculate for a fall as for a rise? Is he ignorant that his letter has done more to induce speculation than any one event of the last three months?

We have directed Mr. McCulloch's attention to the national balances in the national banks for the following reason:—At the close of March it was commonly reported in Wall street that the Treasury was very short of currency, and no little surprise was expressed on the appearance of the April debt statement showing a currency balance in the Treasury of over thirty-four millions. The surprise diminished, however, when the subsequent quarterly bank statement showed that the Treasury had over twenty-seven of the thirty-four millions on deposit with national banks throughout the country—of course free of interest. Now, it is a remarkable fact that for the last six months the amount thus deposited has varied very little, and certainly has not fallen, as far as the public is aware, below twenty-seven millions, looking very much as though these twenty-seven millions were on a sort of permanent deposit, or could not be entirely relied upon to be forthcoming, if wanted suddenly. It is also rumored that even in Mr. Chase's time of abundance certain Treasury drafts on banks in this city were not promptly met, and many people are inclined to think that a good part of the twenty-seven millions referred to would not be the same favor if urgently called for. Here are important topics for McCulloch's next letter.

The Future of the Republican Party. From the Times. The Richmond Conference has resulted in an arrangement which, if followed throughout the South, will probably avert the division with which the Republican party in that section has been threatened. The position assumed by the Virginia extremists in favor of confiscation and other penal measures as supplementary to the enacted policy of Congress, found no favor with the larger and more influential portion of the party. Under the leadership of Governor Pierpont and Mr. Botta, a counter movement was set in motion,

pointing to the reconstruction plan as the basis of party organization and effort. Some of the Virginia delegates from the Union League Clubs intervened to present a declaration which would have thrown the influence of Virginia against reconstruction, and a call for a State Convention has been issued under auspices which apparently insure the defeat of the Humbletonianists.

In Louisiana the same good sense and moderation have been averted in circumstances of yet greater difficulty. There party unity was in immense jeopardy. Local jealousies and divisions had led to the organization of conflicting interests, and these again to the moral weakness of the party. Gradually, however, wiser counsels have prevailed, and though extremists still carry on an outside struggle, their influence is insignificant. The primary elections for members of a Convention developed both enthusiasm and harmony.

The lessons thus taught are at once an encouragement and a warning. They exemplify the controlling power of the more moderate element in the Republican party. And they convict the ultra faction who clamor for confiscation and the imposition of other conditions and penalties yet undefined, of pursuing a course which, while it "dooms themselves to the fate of all schismatics," must "weaken their friends a little and strengthen their enemies a much."

These facts cannot be too distinctly apprehended by the managers of the Republican party movement in the Southern States. They cannot afford to experimentalize with popular feeling, to pander to ignorant passion at the expense of right, or to encumber the party with dependent wholly upon good faith and judgment of the party in the working of the existing law. The plea is that the Republican party, notwithstanding its exaction of unpalatable conditions, is the friend of the Southern people. It offers to them, as evidence of this, the plan matured by Congress, and it declares through its Congressional Committee that that plan is designed to be a finality. The party comes before the South, then, as its best friend—as the agency through which it may regain the peace and privileges of the Union, and the prosperity which will attend re-established order.

The opportunity, if lost, will not recur. The tendency among the influential classes of the South is to gravitate towards the Republican party. The conviction which animates General Longstreet governs the judgment of thousands. They consider the Democracy the embodiment of principles which received their quietus in the war, and they took hopefully to the Republican party as that by which the regeneration of the South may be effected. They take it as its word, and declare their adhesion to it as the party of the future. And they predicate their estimate upon the honest aim of the Reconstruction law as a peace-offering whose acceptance will end existing wrongs. In a party as good as a national sentiment it is essential that the expectations be fulfilled. They are reasonable and just expectations, in view of the action of Congress and the more recent avowals of representative Senators and members, and the party must take care that they be realized. If this be done without needless waste of time—if the confiscationists and malcontents generally be passed by unheeded, or be treated as abettors of the enemy—the Republican party may obtain the mastery at the South. And with preponderating strength there, the fault will be its own if the party be deprived of national power.

To promote party success at the South, however, the Northern Unionists must make manifest their moderation and fairness by an unequivocal indorsement of the reconstruction scheme as a finality. They owe to themselves and to those whose cooperation they seek, the repudiation of the disorganizing schemes which are put forward as pretexts for prolonging the dismemberment of the Union. These are not trifles which they can tolerate with impunity. Simply to be suspected of a leaning towards confiscation would be to provoke the opposition of ninety-nine hundredths of all, North or South, who have ought to lose. For confiscation as proposed by Stevens and Phillips, or a division of land as suggested by Senator Wade, is a war upon property, which, once begun, would not be confined to the South. The North has its agrarians and repudiators, who will not be slow in turning to account any movement for destroying the inviolability of property rights in the Southern States. Hence the importance of crushing at the outset every attempt to fasten upon the Republican party either affiliation with or responsibility for these projects of the extremists. The hope of the party's future lies in its steadfast adherence to the principles which conducted it to victory, and the policy of reconstruction with the success of which its fortunes are identified.

Women and Juries. From the Nation. It appears to be a settled principle of jury-made law that offenses against chastity may be punished with death by the woman's nearest male relative, or, in default of a male relative, by herself, and that no warning need be given to the culprit nor explanation asked of him. Moreover, it is no longer necessary that he be taken flagrant delicto in order to warrant his killing, or that the evidence against him be at all conclusive. A simple statement of a woman that a man has insulted or seduced her is now regarded by juries as sufficient to justify his being slain unprovoked, with all his imperfections upon his head. We might fill a column with illustrations of what we are here asserting in the shape of stories of cowardly murders perpetrated by women, or friends of women, which juries were asked in vain to punish.

The last case of this kind is one of which everybody in this State is now talking—the murder of Mr. Hiscock, a member of the Constitutional Convention at Albany. He is shot suddenly by one of his friends, a General Cole, and in defense of his crime the murderer tells three different stories—first, that Hiscock had violated his wife; secondly, that he had seduced her; and thirdly, that he had simply insulted her—all of them resting on the statement of the wife herself, who, it appeared, did not discontinue her intercourse with Hiscock in consequence of anything that had happened. The only bit of corroborative evidence drawn from the husband's observation consisted, it seems, of the highly suspicious circumstance that the murdered man asked him one day, "when was he going away?" So that if Cole should be acquitted we shall have fresh support for the theory that any woman who has a jealous or crack-brained husband, and little regard for her own reputation, may have any man shot or knifed by reporting him as having behaved unhandsonly to her. In fact, a bad woman who had tried to seduce a man and failed, might in this way gratify her rage and desire of revenge by having him incontinently "taken off," and thereby allowed his doctrine to take root and flourish, the best and most proper man in the community would hold his life at the mercy of any worthless couple who happened to have an acquaintance with him and might for any reason desire his destruction.

The law, we believe, forgives the slaying by a husband of a man taken in adultery; but it does so not because it approves of the practice of avenging one's own injuries, but because it supposes some injuries to be too great for ordinary mortals to submit to in cold blood. In other words, it is presumed that a man who witnessed his own dishonor would be sure to lose all self-control. But there is in this no sanction whatever for the modern doctrine that if A. hears or suspects that B. has been ruining his domestic peace, he may go in search of him with deadly weapons, and whenever he meets him, be it days or months afterwards, kill him on the spot. In fact, a good many of these moral murders are now committed not only in cold blood, but by gentlemen and ladies who are not much troubled at all by the loss of their "honor," and sleep just as soundly as if they still had it in their keeping. They kill "seducers" simply because it is "the thing" to do, and the public expects it of them; or because they think it will procure them a little pleasing notoriety. Nothing could better prove the debauched condition of public opinion, as expressed by juries, than the fact that some of the murderers whose wrongs have excited most sympathy have been themselves rakes and adulterers of the worst kind, and after polluting other people's homes for years, have been supposed—poor fellows!—to be incapable of enduring the pollution of their own.

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may be, is murder, and deserves, in the interest of society, to be punished as murder, ought to be asserted. The only possible excuse that can be put forward for the conduct of juries in refusing to convict "injured husbands" for killing seducers in cold blood, is that the honor of wives cannot be preserved in any other way; but this excuse we imagine very few men would be willing to accept as valid, if presented to them in its naked simplicity.

If wives need any legal assistance in preserving their virtue, it ought to be supplied in the regular way, by making adultery a criminal offense; so that when a man is accused of destroying anybody's peace, he will at least get a hearing for his version of the affair; and even if he is to be put to death on conviction, he will be put to death with decent human formalities instead of being shot like a mad dog. But pending the provision of legal punishment for these offenses, wives and husbands must be left to take care of their own honor, and must find other means of taking care of it than the use of deadly weapons against anybody the wife chooses to point out as her "brayer."

We think that, however opinions may differ as to woman's fitness for the suffrage, very few people will be found to deny that, in her present state of mental and moral development, married women, at least, ought to be able to take care of their own chastity, and ought to be made to do it. Their whole training from childhood up is concentrated on their preparation for this one duty, and society and the Church have surrounded the discharge of it with the most terrible sanctions. Married women, too, have what young unmarried women have not, the knowledge and experience necessary to warn them of their danger; and there is something ridiculous in the popular theory that when they fall they are the innocent victims, the men the real criminals. Women, to be sure, are proverbially "frail," but so are men; and in the existing state of opinion a woman brings to the violation of the marriage vow a much stronger and more deep-seated sense of the sin of it than a man does, and is, therefore, on any sound theory of accountability, by far the guiltier of the two.

The theory of woman's character and position on which blame is cast for adultery, if now distributed, and on which the law of seducers is justified, is really very little superior to that set out in the laws of Manu. She is so helpless, so conscienceless, so ready to fall, that to throw temptation in her way is considered the foulest act a man can commit, and it is so hard to keep her from falling that public sentiment authorizes the husband to assassinate his best friends in broad daylight for the protection of her purity.

The case of young, unmarried women is, we admit, different. Whether rightly or wrongly, they are so educated that they neither know when they are running risks nor how to guard against them; and as long as this system of education is or has to be continued, fathers and brothers must be armed with summary powers for protecting them, or the legal penalties of seduction must be made vastly heavier than they are now. But, as a matter of fact, the women who take the law into their own hands, and kill their faithless lovers, and secure impunity from juries, are hardly ever youthful innocents.

They are generally tolerably mature spinsters, who know perfectly well what they are about, both when they are lavishing their affections on the unworthy object, and when they are pistolling him for running away, and there is probably no more reputable spectacle to be witnessed than the mock trials of offenses of this kind by which our Courts are sometimes disgraced. In fact, side by side with the agitation in one portion of the community for woman's admission to greater social freedom, is growing up a tendency, in another portion, to release her more and more from both legal and moral responsibility. There is strong reluctance abroad to convict a good-looking woman of any offense whatever.

We even doubt whether Bridget Dergan, who killed her mistress the other day in New Jersey, would, though not good-looking, have been convicted had she simply killed her master. But when it is made to appear that love is at the bottom of a young woman's crimes, she becomes deaf to the claims of order and law and morality. As soon as she sees the side of the tragedy begins to show itself in the evidence, the jurymen wipe their eyes, the Court blows its nose, the counsel's voice grows husky, and the "poor young thing" is dismissed with the deepest emotion, and the friends of the dead man sneak to their desolate homes amidst the frowns of the judgment and virtuous crowd.